

DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP

A monthly magazine devoted to the collecting, preservation and literature of the old-time dime and nickel novels, libraries and popular story papers.

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Dime Novels In France

By George Fronval

Translated by Albert J. Dumoulin, Jr.



George Fronval

The French, too, have had their Dime Novels. Actually in France there are many collectors who look for old numbers and try to make up complete sets, and the task is not always an easy one.

A century ago, many magazines for young people appeared in Paris; strangely enough, they resembled one

another. At that time publishing lacked originality and imagination. Jules Verne was then triumphant in the world of novels. His novels appeared in LE MAGASIN D'EDUCATION, a weekly which had a large circulation though it appeared in unattractive covers. During the 12 months of every year millions of readers were enter-

tained by the heroes of Jules Verne's passionate adventures. The famous novelist had a contract with Hetzel, who had found him to be an able and inspired author. When Hetzel sold out to Hachette, it was this company who published and continue to publish Jules Verne's works.

At the same time, a foreign novelist became famous in France. He was Captain Mayne Reid. Born in England, he lived in the United States and worked for the Beadle Company, the creator of the Dime Novel. Most of Mayne Reid's novels, if not all of them, were translated into French. At first they were published by Hetzel (the publisher who introduced Jules Verne). These novels first appeared in groups of 8, in large volumes with red covers, gold leaf, and which were printed with much care and were remarkably well illustrated. When Hachette took over Hetzel's business, these novels were printed separately. Hachette used the illustrations from the Rose Library. This was before they were reprinted in other series such as those of the famous MERICANT publications.

A 100 years ago, Parisian publishers delved into American publications and Beadle's novels were translated into French. As was the custom of that time, the real author's names such as Edward S. Ellis, Ann S. Stephens, Metta V. Victor and William Busted were forgotten and the new texts appeared with the translator's signature, thus he could appear, as far as his readers were concerned, as the real author.

It was by following this system that Charles Bernard-Derosne, then publisher of two large Parisian magazines, LE GAULOIS and RUY BLAS, published under the pen name of Cam-

ille de Cendray, many translations of novels which had appeared in Beadle's American Library and Beadle's Dime Novels.

My excellent British colleague, Denis R. Rogers, whom you know very well, has already brought some of these translations to your attention in a very interesting and remarkably well done documented article (see Dime Novel Round-up No. 347, August, 1961). I will forego extending myself on the subject. I will be satisfied to quote for memory's sake, the titles of Beadle's novels which appeared in France toward the end of the last century.

Firstly, LE TRAPPEUR DU KANSAS (Bill Bidden, Trapper; or, Life in the Northwest) by Edward S. Ellis, printed for the last time, in LA COLLECTION MERICANT in 2 volumes, 0.25 centimes per volume; Nos. 75 and 75a; and LE PRISONNIER DES SIOUX (Nathan Todd; or, The Fate of the Sioux Captive) by the same author, also in LA COLLECTION MERICANT; Nos. 94 and 98.

Secondly we have LA FILLE DU GRAND CHEF (Malaeska, the Indian Wife of the White Hunter) by Ann S. Stephens, published by Le Dentu and later in LA COLLECTION MERICANT as Nos. 110 and 111; Edward S. Ellis' L'ANGE DES FRONTIERES (The Frontier Angel, A Romance of a Kentucky Ranger's Life). Nos. 122 and 123 of LA COLLECTION MERICANT; Metta V. Victor's FLECHE D'OR (The Gold Hunters. A Picture of Western Characters and Pike's Peak Life), Nos. 142 and 143; Edward S. Ellis' LA CAPTIVE DES MOHAWKS (Seth Jones; or, The Captives of the Frontier, Nos. 160 and 161. Ann S. Stephens' LE RANCHO DE LA VALLIE (Sybil Chase; or,

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The Valley Ranch. A Tale of California Life.) Nos. 192 and 193.

Arthur Mericant also published as original matter the following: Ann S. Stephens' L'ENFANT D'ADOPTION (Myra, the Child of Adoption. A Romance of Real Life in LA COLLECTION MERICANT Nos. 176 and 177; N. William Bustled's LES VIERGES DE LA FORET (King Barnaby; or, The Maidens of the Forest. A Romance of the Mickmacks). Nos. 245 and 246 LA COLLECTION MERICANT; Nos. 251 and 252 contained LE ROI DES NUAGES (The King of the Clouds); Nos. 258 and 259, LES COLONS DU MISSOURI (The Planters of the Missouri). Metta V. Victor's LA FAMILLE DU BATELIER (Alice Wilds, the Raftsmen's Daughter. A Forest Romance) appeared in Nos. 302 and 303. In Nos. 316 and 317 appeared LES CAPTIFS FRANCAIS (The French Prisoners); and in Nos. 423 and 424 LES DRAMES DE LA SAVANE (The Dramas of the Savanna). I have been unable to identify the last few with their presumed Beadle counterparts.

I repeat, these novels appeared in France seeming to have one author, Camille de Cendray, pen name for Charles Bernard Derosne. No mention is made of Edward S. Ellis, Metta V. Victor or Ann S. Stephens.

In his article, Denis R. Rogers revolts against this cheap and disgusting manner. Then again, let us not criticize the French author; an author's rights were not guaranteed or defended at this time. I can quote some French novels which appeared in England and America having British and American signatures. Now, the critics may justly be criticised.

The first novels to reveal popular American literature to the French public were those of Mayne Reid and Arthur Mericant's stories (despite the lack of the author's signature). Thanks to these stories, the French readers were able to get into an unknown and attractive atmosphere. Thus, they discovered a people of whom they had up till then, a false idea. It is good to



underline the importance of the popular novel in the relationship of one people to the other. The American Dime Novels (especially those of the turn of the century) translated into French aided American publicity in Europe more than one thousand political conferences.

The publications we are now going to talk about were read by thousands and thousands of readers of whom, today, there are many white haired men who will produce an emotional smile when one speaks of Buffalo Bill or Nick Carter, whose fantastic adventures fascinated their childhood.

During the year 1907 the publishers presented the first French publications in Series. These are A. Eichler of 107 Rosenstrasse, Dresden, Germany and The NOUVELLE POPULAIRE which, in 1910 would merge with the rival firm.

It is difficult to tell, exactly, which were the last number of certain series edited by A. Eichler. His varied publications (6 adventure and police series to which must be added 6 love novels in series), for the most part, were ended by the war of 1914. A. Eichler was, in fact, German. His house was seized at the beginning of the hostilities. We cannot say wheth-

er or not the week's copies, printed and ready to be distributed were sold or destroyed. That is why it is hard even for specialists to tell whether or not, for example, Buffalo Bill, the star series, had 394 or 395 numbers.

A. Eichler's Parisian offices were first established on rue Monsieur le Prince, later at 20 and 41 rue Dauphine and after the merger with the Nouvelle Populaire at 9, 11 and 13 rue Friant. Many series were to be printed here. In 1912, the A. Eichler issues destined for French circulation were composed and printed in Germany. A. Eichler had a considerable market. After having acquired the rights for continental Europe to the two principal series of Street & Smith Buffalo Bill and Nick Carter, he not only published them in Germany and France but also in Russia, Austria, Italy, Spain and Scandinavia.

On January 8, 1907, the first novel series appeared in France, a replica of the American Dime Novels. It was Buffalo Bill at 0.25 centimes a copy. "Only editions originally authorized by Colonel W. F. Cody" could be seen on the booklet covers. The title of the first booklet, "LE HERO DU FAR WEST" was followed by a sub-title, "LA COURSE A LA MORT A TRAVERS LES CAMPEMENTS ENEMIS." This issue is the only one with a French sub-title. The others, except twenty or so are illustrated with the original Street and Smith design "by the Author of Buffalo Bill" with English sub-titles. The publishing of Buffalo Bill ceased in 1914. We know of 394 issues. This last number was entitled "Le Courrier a Cheval."

The first French issue of Nick Carter is dated March 22, 1907. 383 issues, sold at 0.25 centimes, make up the series. This series is divided into two: the first part of 213 issues; the second of 170 issues. Nick Carter was also interrupted by the war. Issue number 171 was certainly printed but never sold. In France, Nick Carter was issued in three different formats in conformity with the Street & Smith covers. The first bore the legend "Un

Maitre du Crime," had a red cover and a picture of Nick Carter in a circle to the left along with the additional legend, "Nick Carter, le Grand Detective Americain" and under this, the title of the story. The second format had a picture that covered the entire cover; the third had a scene in the center of a circle, the circle having the variable dimensions of either a key hole or a knot hole.

Buffalo Bill and Nick Carter were the appreciated series. They had a large circulation and are, today, the ones most often seen, especially early issues.

Encouraged by the sale of these two series, A. Eichler decided to publish other series in France. He delved into his German publications. In Dresden he published for the German public many well appreciated series. He chose those which best corresponded to the tastes of his French readers and had them translated.

The first of these, SOUS LE PAVILLON NOIR, LES AVENTURES DE MORGAN LE PIRATE, comprising 200 issues sold at 0.10 centimes each, was published between July 1907 and July 1911. It had 3 different formats and the cover was artistically designed. SOUS LE PAVILLON NOIR, which takes place in the Caribbean Sea, relates the exploits of the pirates, buccaneers and inhabitants of Turtle Island.

March 8, 1908, A. Eichler gave Nick Carter a rival. Each week the text translated from the German related an exploit of Nat Pinkerton, "The best detective of our day." This format which sold for 0.10 centimes was smaller than Nick Carter. Nat Pinkerton whose adventures had absolutely nothing to do with those of the famous Chicago detective, Allan Pinkerton, was interrupted in August of 1914 at number 336. The format of the first 120 numbers was slightly larger than the following ones. The cover was dark blue and had at the left a circular picture of Nat Pinkerton. The heading of numbers 121 to the last was red with the detective's

face colored slightly different.

In 1910, A. Eichler edited a new series whose format was identical to Nick Carter. This series was called LORD LISTER, LE GRAND INCONNU. Lord Lister was a sort of gentleman crook who resembled, in many ways, the famous Arsen Lupin, Maurice LeBlanc's hero. This series lasted only 20 issues.

Concerning Lord Lister it is good to notice that between the two wars, A. Eichler's publishing business was scattered. Publishing rights in France were sold to different publishers after he died around 1922. Buffalo Bill, Nick Carter, Nat Pinkerton and Lord Lister were taken over by Belge Sobeli, the Cohen Brothers, 23 and 25 rue des Boulets in Brussels who re-edited them. The second edition of LORD LISTER was bigger than the first. The text was renewed, some modified, and the numerical order changed. The hero in the new stories is sometimes called Raffles, E. A. Hornung's novel hero.

At present there is in Belgium, written in the Flemish language, a third edition of LORD LISTER in a somewhat summarized form. The numbers already printed surpass those of the second edition.

As to Sobeli let us signal out that between the two wars this publisher reedited Buffalo Bill and Nick Carter. The first numbers appeared in 1923 at 1 franc each. The price was later increased. The Cohen brothers reedited Nat Pinkerton in 1931 at 1 franc per copy. The publication ended in 1936 with number 193. The price had risen to 1 franc 50.

Sobeli put BUFFALO BILL on the market for the third time around 1946. There were but 50 issues sold at 35 francs each. The covers resembled earlier ones but they were badly designed. This is without a doubt one of the reasons for the failure of this third series.

But let us return to A. Eichler. This prolific editor published from October 1910 to October of the following year a French version of a cloak and dag-



ger series of English rather than German origin: It was published in the familiar dime novel format in London by Aldine. We are referring to CLAUDE DUVAL by Charlton Lea. This series had more than 200 issues in England but only 50 were issued in France.

A. Eichler's French edition had the same cover as Aldine. Each number sold for 0.25 centimes. The twelve first numbers had 64 pages, the 38 following issues had 48 pages. CLAUDE DUVAL related the exploits of a famous French bandit, a Robin Hood of his day, who really lived and operated in England, especially in the slums of London. Always dressed with rare elegance, Claude Duval figures among the most celebrated of English dandies. A good looking and very distinguished man, he had many sentimental adventures with jolly English women.

In mid June of 1909, A. Eichler put out a strange publication; copies of this publication are rather rare today. This series could hold quite a place among the Science Fiction classics of today. It was called SAR DUBNOTAL, LE GRAND PSYCHAGOGIE. SAR DUBNOTAL presented under the same format as that of Buffalo Bill and Nick Carter had some very striking covers drawn with infinite care.

These adroitly constructed stories created a supernatural state, that of mediums. One read of spiritualism, levitations, ghosts, fortune telling, of double life and then some. In other words, of a supernatural and extraordinary world. Without a doubt these stories surpassed the intelligence of the readers of the time and were bought by only a small number of experts. This series sold at 0.25 centimes and had only 10 numbers. Number 11 was printed but never distributed.

A. Eichler gave Nick Carter a feminine rival, **ETHEL KING, LE NICK CARTER FEMININ** came out in 1912 having the same format as **NAT PINKERTON** and was supposedly written by Jean Petithuguenin who had translated most of the Nick Carter stories. The war interrupted **ETHEL KING** after two years of publishing.

Two small publications, **ROUGES ET BLANCS** and **VOYAGES ET AVENTURES** complete the A. Eichler adventure and police series. The first of these had 78 numbers, each issue relating an adventure of Pierre Biscard, a cowboy of French origin. Some of these stories are copies of another series, **TEXAS JACK**. We will speak of him later. The second series ended after two issues. It was simply a group of stories having no link or common characters. It had the same format as **Nat Pinkerton**. These two series and **ETHEL KING** were sold for 0.10 centimes a copy.

During the year 1907, at the same time as A. Eichler, another Parisian publisher specialized in dime novels. It was Fernand Laven, the director of the publishing house, **LA NOUVELLE POPULAIRE** which had its offices at 76 rue de Rennes.

Nouvelle Populaire's first publication was **TEXAS JACK, LE TERRIBLE DES INDIENS**. This story of German origin told the adventures of an audacious and courageous soldier of fortune who had the same name as the famous Jack Omohundro. **TEXAS JACK** appeared each week starting October 1, 1907.

The German series of **TEXAS JACK** started in 1906 and had 215 numbers. This series was taken over by A. Eichler as of number 216 and was published till number 270. From numbers 199 to 214, A. Eichler finished publishing the French translations of the German text. Starting with number 215 we have a new **Texas Jack** who has nothing in common with the previous one. (It is interesting to note that these stories were the same as the eighth and last presentation of **BUFFALO BILL**, same title, same pictures). **Texas Jack** became **Buffalo Bill's** double. It isn't surprising since the cover illustrations were drawn by English artists including Robert Procter of the **NEW BUFFALO BILL LIBRARY**. The text of the stories strongly resemble the late numbers of A. Eichler's **Buffalo Bill** stories but substantially condensed.

The 215 issues of the German edition of **TEXAS JACK** were not all translated into French. A few issues were set in Maximilian's Mexico. We doubt that the French soldiers under General Bazaine were presented under favorable conditions. On the other hand, these stories were a great success in Germany.

LES DOSSIERS DU ROI DES DETECTIVES is the title of **Nouvelle Populaire's** second series. Sold at 0.25 centimes and of the same format as **BUFFALO BILL**, it had only 30 numbers.

If one must be precise, we must say that the first issue was entitled **LES DOSSIERS SECRETS DE SHERLOCK HOLMES**. The second and third numbers, in one solid color—proof of a hasty reprinting—has the title which was to appear on 28 following issues. The protest of Pierre Laffite, French editor of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's novels brought this change of title. The relative success of **DOSSIERS SECRETS DU ROI DES DETECTIVES** illustrated by the German painter Alfred Roloff who illustrated the cover of **TEXAS JACK**, seems to stem from the innocence of certain characters which make up many implausible situ-

tions.

In 1929, after having been translated into German, this series was re-edited in French by an Amsterdam firm which used the title: **HARRY DICKSON, LE SHERLOCK HOLMES AMERICAIN**. The new publisher asked the Belgian novelist Jean Roy, who had become an expert in fantastic fiction, to write some new stories. Between the two wars, **HARRY DICKSON** had more than 70 issues.

The first number of **SITTING BULL, LE DERNIER DES SIOUX** was distributed on March 5, 1908. It had the same format as **TEXAS JACK**. Published by the *Nouvelle Populaire*, the series had only 50 issues. But immediately following came another series: **LES CHEFS INDIENS CELEBRES** having a slightly different format, a little larger than **TEXAS JACK**. There were 110 issues at 0.15 centimes. One may come across quite a few of the adventures of *Sitting Bull* in this series. Let us signal out that the series of **CHEFS INDIENS CELEBRES** had in its original German edition the 50 numbers which made up the French series of **SITTING BULL, LE DERNIER DES SIOUX** and a few other issues which could not be published in France because the French Canadians were presented in unfavorable situations.

STOERTE-BECKER, of German origin is the story of a German pirate operating in the Baltic Sea against the Hanseatic, the Danes and the residents of Hamburg. There were two distinct series. The first was started by *Nouvelle Populaire* and continued by A. Eichler as of number 58. **STOERTE-BECKER, LE SOUVERAIN DES OCEANS** started May 8, 1910, sold for 0.10 centimes and ended at number 87. A. Eichler who was still the editor continued with a second series. It had a different format—much smaller—with a less attractive cover. **STOERTE BECKER, LE ROI DES OCEANS**. This series by Jean Petit-huguenin had 50 numbers. The last 14 numbers, not signed, tell stories of a time much closer to our own, that of



pirates and buccaneers. The 37 covers of the second series are of the same type. The following numbers to number 50 were drawn by the illustrator of **MORGAN LE PIRATE**. **STOERTE BECKER** makes up a collection of 200 issues each with 24 pages.

The success of A. Eichler's publications encouraged other publishers to follow his example. At this time on rue Saint Joseph, not far from rue Montmartre, near the Bourse an important editor was each week distributing an abundance of popular literature to millions of readers. **LIBRAIRIE ILLUSTREE** which was later to take the name of its director and become **EDITIONS JULES TALLANDIER** was the first publishing company of cheap editions destined for a less fortunate public.

Since 1877, the **LIBRAIRIE ILLUSTREE** published a remarkable weekly, **LE JOURNAL DES VOYAGES** which contained novels by famous authors which the house had previously contracted. Jules Tallandier had first choice of the works of Louis Brousse-nard, Paul d'Ivoi, Captain Danrit, Jules Lermina, George le Faure and

Rene Thevenin. In 1907, during the same year as A. Eichler started publishing in France, LIBRAIRIE ILLUSTREE started publishing a novel series which for 46 weeks brought its readers around the world. LE TOUR DU MONDE DE DEUX GOSSES was the title of the series. Count Henri de la Vaulx, a pioneer of French aviation and Arnold Galopin, a productive novelist, were the authors. LE TOUR DU MONDE DE DEUX GOSSES came out each Tuesday. The cover had a red border and was very colorful. The text itself was accompanied by illustrations.

The first number of another novel series started in the last issue, No. 46, of TOUR DU MONDE DE DEUX GOSSES. A large yellow border made up the cover's margin. The title of this new series was LES AVENTURES FANTASTIQUES D'UN PETIT PARISIEN and had for a sub-title LES CHERCHEURS D'INCONNUS which was enough to indicate that this was a new series of stories. But LES AVENTURES FANTASTIQUES D'UN PETIT PARISIEN were cut short and ended at number 12. The readers of this story were baffled by the hero's encounters with extraordinary nightmares-like beings. This series was too audacious. It was written by Arnold Galopin. This novelist with an imaginative mind would write, each year, a new series published by Albin Michel. These included COLETTE ET FRANCINET, LES AVENTURES D'UN PETIT EXPLORATEUR, LES AVENTURES D'UN PETIT CHASSUR DE PAMPAS, LES AVENTURES D'UN POILU DE 12 ANS, LES AVENTURES D'UN AVIATEUR DE 15 ANS, LES AVENTURES D'UN BOY SCOUT and many others.

During this year, 1907, LIBRAIRIE ILLUSTREE tried two experiments which were unsuccessful. Jules Lermina, one of its authors, presented in 12 issues the story of TOTO FOUINARD, a young Parisian lad, an amateur detective and a crafty go-getter. Having the same format as BUFFALO BILL this series sold for .15 centimes

and lasted 3 months. LA VIE D'AVENTURES was written at the top of each number's cover. LA VIE D'AVENTURES was also the title of one of LIBRAIRIE ILLUSTREE'S editions which at that time appeared twice monthly and presented an adventure story. These were written by the authors of the firm: Louis Bousсенard, Jules Lermina, Georges Le Faure or Rene Thevenin or by some foreign authors such as Sir Arthur Conan Doyle or Cutcliffe Hyne who introduced his famous heroes, Captain Kettle and William Cobb.

After six months of publishing LA VIE D'AVENTURES ended as a distinct publication and became the last 4 pages of the monthly JOURNAL DES VOYAGES.

These 4 publications by LIBRAIRIE ILLUSTREE, all having the same format were sold for 0.25 centimes. They were printed with much care on paper of fine quality. The last page of the cover of LES AVENTURES FANTASTIQUES D'UN PETIT PARISIEN had printed on the left side at the bottom, "printed with shining Lustral ink".

Arthur Merican, the publisher of many translations of Beadle's Dime Novels in his Mericant series published a remarkable novel by Pierre Giffard, LA GUERRE INFERNALE. One can say that Robida's surprising illustrations made of this more or less conventional story the most extraordinary anticipatory novel. In all 32 issues Robida continued to give his wild imagination full freedom.

On Rue de Lancry, near Republique Square there was a modest publisher who through the course of events, became Jules Tallandier's equal. Ferenczi, as did Tallandier, specialized in popular literature. While publishing a love story every week he was able to give his younger readers adventure and police stories. He published series similar to A. Eichler and gave him a lot of competition. The author's name was not mentioned, though most of them were written by Jules de Castyne, a rather unknown

author of popular novels.

This author wrote for Ferenczi among other things the adventures of MARC JORDAN, A FRENCH DETECTIVE, Nick Carter's rival. This series had the same format as A. Eichler's BUFFALO BILL, had 32 pages, and was sold for 0.25 centimes. Jules de Castyne's second series was RIFLE D'OR. These stupendous adventures had the same format as TEXAS JACK and were sold for 0.15 centimes (there were many similarities between the two series which, without doubt, were not accidental). The third series was GIL DAX, featuring stories of serial adventures. There were only 20 numbers and the format was the same as MARC JORDAN.

Ferenczi later moved to much larger quarters on rue Antoine Chantin where he is today. He published Leon Sazie's mysterious police novel ZIGOMAR in small economy books. The hero of the story was a strange man dressed in a somber cowl who terrorized Paris for 28 issues. Ferenczi became a specialist in Dime Novels. He published many of Jean de la Hire's works. He was a specialist in fantasy stories. He created three characters which were to revolutionize stories for the young ones. These stories were successively called, LES TROIS BOY SCOUTS, L'AS DES BOY SCOUTS and LES GRANDES AVENTURES DE TROIS BOY SCOUTS.

At the same time, the same firm published LES AVENTURES D'UN PETIT PARISIEN DANS LE CIEL, an endless anticipatory novel by Marcel Privollet, a specialist in sentimental novels for young girls. Henri de Nizerolles was his pen name. This novel was often reedited under different titles and with important textual changes made in accord with more modern texts.

A shortlived publisher from Rue du Coq Heron published a curious pamphlet for 3 months. Each issue was made up of two different novels; one a police story by Goron who was a famous member of the Paris Criminal Inves-



tigation Department; the other a sentimental story. The pamphlet had a double title, POLICIERS ET BANDITS and RECIT D'AVENTURES ET D'AMOUR. Each cover illustrated the novel which started on the next page. The designs were in Tete-beche and to the interior; the second novel's text was inverted as though the copy had not been put together correctly. This series had only 12 numbers; copies of which are found today with great difficulty. Only the first 10 numbers had police stories by Goron.

Albin Michel, who between the two wars, was to publish many of Arnold Galopin's novels, published in 1914 two novels in series. The first, MISS BOSTON, was a police story having a woman detective as heroine. This series had only 20 numbers having the same format as BUFFALO BILL and sold for 0.25 centimes. The second, VIE D'AVENTURES ET DE CHASSE DU DOMPTEUR EDMOND PEZON had a famous lion tamer from the Paris fairs as hero. This story is presented as Pezon's memoirs and contains many unbelievable parts.

There were at least 25 numbers having the same format as TEXAS JACK and sold for 0.20 centimes.

It would be unfair to end this enumeration without mentioning Arthème Fayard. He began publishing popular novels by distributing his books from door to door. He solicited his client at home and brought him his reading matter. Arthème Fayard was a popular publisher for a long time. One of his principal series is entitled LE LIVRE POPULAIRE. Today many collectors look for the so-called 65 centimes. These books were sold for 0.65 centimes and were printed on rather cheap paper. The text was crammed onto some 375 or more pages (some novels written by Michel Zevaco, a specialist in historical novels of the cloak and dagger type, had as many as 600 pages and were spaced out in quite a few numbers). The covers were always well made, designed with care and printed with ink that resembled varnish. Pierre Souvestre and Marcel Allain's extraordinary novel, FANTOMAS was about a mysterious man formally dressed, top hat and all, but with the face of a wolf. It was published in a special series resembling LIVRE POPULAIRE and sold for 0.65 centimes. FANTOMAS was re-edited quite a few times but was not as successful as the first edition (it is presently being published in comic book form). Certain episodes were put on film. The 32 volumes of FANTOMAS are in great demand but are rarely found in good condition since the cover was especially fragile. Amateurs will pay as much as 20 nouveaux francs, about \$2.00 for one volume.

Let us note that among the novels of LIVRE POPULAIRE, 5 volumes contained the exploits of VAUTOURS DE LA SIERRA, a gentleman crook who commanded a band of faithful companions. They took refuge in the Spanish Sierras and fought to protect the poor and humble against oppressors and despots. This novel first appeared in October 1906 in a family magazine NOS LOISIRS. The authors of the novel were then K. Hesketh

Prichard and Georges Clavigny. Later on, the new adventures of Vautour were apparently written by Georges Clavigny only. When this novel first appeared he was supposed to have been the adapter. Fayard's books have his name only. In 1922 a modest publisher (LES EDITIONS PRIMA) re-edited LE VAUTOURS DE LA SIERRA in series form. This same publisher who published many of Simenon's books under the pen name of Com Gut published a series of 40 numbers at 0.25 centimes, LES DERNIERS EXPLOITS DE BUFFALO BILL CONTRE SITTING BULL. He also published a series which had 21 numbers and was about an American policeman whose name was, curiously enough, Dick Carter. These two publications were written by Jean Bordeaux who wrote under the American pen name "Captain Browning."

In 0.65 centimes volumes, Arthème Fayard also published the adventure novels of Gustave Aimard, a French author who placed most of his stories in the America's, especially in the American West. Since he had travelled widely, Gustave Aimard was well informed. He satisfied himself with unending descriptions.

We must note that most of LIVRE POPULAIRE'S novels had previously appeared in series form with a much longer text. Some had as many as 300 numbers.

In 1944 after the last war, some French publishers tried to revive the novel in series form. Pardon me for speaking of myself, but I was one of the promoters of this movement. In fact, I wrote 54 stories making up the series: LES MERVEILLEUX EXPLOITS DE BUFFALO BILL, for Boursiac who owned a subsidiary company LES EDITIONS DUCLOS. The format was identical to that of TEXAS JACK having 20 pages per number. This series was very well received by the readers at large and had a circulation of 60,000 copies per issue. The ending of this publication and the disappearance of the publisher was due to the simple fact of the latter's in-

consistency.

Today, in France as far as novels in series are concerned, there are but a few collectors who are trying to dig up these marvelous vestiges of a past so near. These pamphlet hunters look in second hand and first class book stores. They try to complete sets—this is not always an easy job. The pamphlets were often stored in attics and cellars where humidity and rats sometimes destroyed them. During the years of occupation, many people used these novels, which were of little value to them, to make paper balls for heating purposes. Others simply got rid of them as junk.

Thus dear members of the Happy Hour Brotherhood, French amateurs try to save these pamphlets and series from destruction. Are not these the nostalgic bits of an era which is slowly becoming a part of the past, that of our childhood?

I hope this extremely long list did not seem dull. May our dear (I say "our" since I am now one of you), may our dear DIME NOVEL ROUND UP be the link between the collectors of the United States and those of my country, France.

Isn't it a lot better to speak of Dime Novels than to discuss politics?

FOR SALE — PLUCK AND LUCK

656 780 809 1052 1163 1251 1300 1322
1329 1341 1366 V.G. to Perfect. 638
640 666 668 1134 1138 1140 1153,
Fair, frayed edges, etc.

\$17 for all

W. MULLINS

Bullet Hole Rd., Mahopac, N. Y.

At least we are sure not to quarrel.
Good day, my friends in America
and elsewhere.

WANTED !

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